WELCOME

It’s easy to get a little too nostalgic when thinking back to the golden age of arcades. In reality, the coin-op era – assuming you’re old enough to remember it – wasn’t always particularly golden. If one game yielded a hit, then arcades would suddenly be packed with almost identical clones of that game. And when arcade games weren’t copying each other, they’d rinse players for every coin they had in their pockets: bosses capable of killing you with a single hit; tiny platforms designed to have you plummeting into a deadly chasm.

Every so often, though, amusement arcades would throw out something incredible. Few who were there at the time will forget the thrill of fighting alongside their friends (or a few friendly strangers) in Gauntlet or one of Konami’s four-player brawlers. Or the sensation of being jostled around in one of Sega’s ‘body sensation’ arcade machines, like OutRun or After Burner. Or leaping out of cover and shooting hatted villains in Time Crisis.

Arcades will never hold the sway over the games industry they once did, and that’s probably a good thing, given how unoriginal and cheap they could often be. But coin-ops were about fleeting moments by design – the odd blast here, the occasional bout of fighting there. And it’s those absolute high points we’re celebrating in our features on pages 28 and 38. Taken as a whole, arcade games weren’t always great. But occasionally, they’d create gaming moments you simply couldn’t find anywhere else.

Enjoy the new issue!

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